THE COUNSELOR
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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February 6, 1979

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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CONFIDENTIAL (Entire Text)

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: Matt Nimetz

SUBJECT: Jonestown Aftermath

We have undertaken a number of initiatives in the past month to determine what steps the Department might undertake with respect to Jonestown-type situations.

As you know, Ambassador John Crimmins and Stan Carpenter--two senior retired FSO's--are preparing a report on the Department's role in the events preceding the Jonestown tragedy. They have already interviewed nearly every person involved in the government's relationship with the People's Temple community and are currently in Guyana to investigate the embassy's handling of the situation there. Their final report should be ready at the beginning of March and, at that time, we shall need to decide whether to release it to the public and the Congress. I have attached a copy of their work program for your information.

We have also been studying a number of possibilities for improving the Department's contact with traveling congressional delegations and upgrading the security protection afforded to members of Congress while they are overseas. I shall be sending you a more detailed memorandum on this subject, along with proposed recommendations, in the near future.

We are also looking into the advisability of expanding or revising the general and advanced consular training programs in order to improve the ability of our consular officers to deal with future situations analogous to Jonestown. This is an area that will require a great deal of thought and care, and I have been working closely with M and CA in investigating the various options.

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Finally, I have today sent the attached telegram to all of our posts and missions containing guidance on the standards to be applied when reporting on developments concerning groups of Americans who are resident abroad and emphasizing the importance the Department attaches to being promptly informed of potentially troublesome situations while at the same time respecting the rights of all Americans to carry out their day-to-day activities free from government surveillance.

Attachments:

1. Department of State Study on the People's Temple in Guyana.

2. Department Telegram to all Posts.

cc: M - Mr. Read

DEPARTMENT OF STATE STUDY ON THE PEOPLE'S TEMPLE IN GUYANA

This study is intended to be an examination of all aspects of the relationship between the People's Temple agricultural community in Guyana and the Department of State and the American Embassy in Georgetown, Guyana prior to the incidents of November 18.

The study will address the following issues in particular:

— The extent of the Department's and the Embassy's knowledge of the activities and purposes of the People's Temple.

— Inter-bureau and inter-agency coordination in Washingotn with regard to matters concerning the People's Temple in Guyana.

— The actions and responsibilities of the Department and the Embassy with regard to the members of the People's Temple in Guyana and the concerned relatives of People's Temple members.

— The preparations made for Congressman Ryan's Novembe visit to Guyana.

Based upon existing documents and interviews with Department and Embassy officers, and, as necessary, office of other agencies of the U.S. Government, the study will

examine the relationship of the Department and the Embassy with the People's Temple in Guyana and with concerned relatives of People's Temple members from the time of the emigration of members of the Temple to Guyana until November 18, 1978.

The study and any recommendations arising from it should be submitted to the Secretary no later than March 1, 1979.

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C:MNIMETZ

M:BREAD
M/CT:AQUAINTON
ARA:BGROVE
HA:DMARTIN

L:LMARKS
S/P:EMORTON
CA:BWATSON

ROUTINE ALL DIPLOMATIC POSTS

INFORM CONSULS

E.O. 11652: GDS 1/6/85, (NIMETZ, MATTHEW)

TAGS: CASC, OGEN

SUBJECT: POST REPORTS ON AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

1. (U - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. THE JONESTOWN TRAGEDY HIGHLIGHTED THE POTENTIAL IMPACT THAT INDIVIDUAL GROUPS OF AMERICANS MAY HAVE ON U.S. DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CONCERNS. WE MUST ALL BE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO THOSE SITUATIONS -- ADMITTEDLY INFREQUENT AND USUALLY UNIQUE -- WHERE THE PRESENCE OVERSEAS OF A DISCRETE AND OFTEN SELF-CONTAINED GROUP OF AMERICANS MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CONDUCT OF RELATIONS WITH THE HOST GOVERNMENT, THE INTERESTS OF THE USG, OR THE WELFARE OF AMERICAN CITIZENS ABROAD.

3. THERE ARE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL FACTORS THAT POSTS SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN REPORTING ON SUCH SITUATIONS. OUR ACTIONS MUST NOT IMPINGE ON THE FREE EXERCISE OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND NOT CONFLICT WITH FIRST AMENDMENT FREEDOMS OF SPEECH, ASSOCIATION, AND THE PRACTICE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS. WE MUST BE SENSITIVE TO THE FACT THAT EVERY AMERICAN HAS A BASIC RIGHT TO BE LEFT ALONE. UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, THE VERY ACT OF GATHERING AND REPORTING INFORMATION MAY HAVE A CHILLING EFFECT ON THE EXERCISE OF CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES.

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4. THE PRIVACY ACT CLEARLY PRECLUDES REPORTING OR RECORD-KEEPING BY THE DEPARTMENT WITH RESPECT TO AN INDIVIDUAL'S EXERCISE OF HIS CONSTITUTIONAL FREEDOMS. THE ONLY EXCEPTIONS RELATE TO SPECIFIC CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS OR ACTIVITIES DONE WITH THE INDIVIDUAL'S KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT.

5. HOWEVER, ORGANIZED GORUPS OF AMERICANS OVERSEAS WHOSE ACTIVITIES MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE WELFARE OF AMERICAN CITIZENS OR VIOLATE U.S. OR FOREIGN LAWS ARE OF LEGITIMATE INTEREST TO THE USG. POSTS SHOULD INFORM THE DEPARTMENT ABOUT THE NATURE AND ACTIVITIES OF SUCH GROUPS. THIS SHOULD BE DONE WITHOUT CHARACTERIZATIONS OF CONSTITUTIONAL-LY PROTECTED BELIEFS OR PRINCIPLES AND, IN MOST CASES, WITHOUT INDENTIFYING SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS.

6. POST SHOULD REPORT BY NORMAL TELEGRAPHIC CHANNELS. IN CASES WHERE THE POST IS UNSURE HOW THESE GUIDELINES RELATE TO A SPECIFIC GROUP, YOU SHOULD SEEK GUIDANCE FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTORATE WHO WILL CONSULT CLOSELY WITH CA, L AND OTHER APPROPRIATE OFFICES. YY

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON

1/26/79

Memorandum

To: C - Mr. Carpenter

Subject: The Study on Jonestown

Representative Dante Fascell's staff has requested that you add two issues to those you plan to address in your study:

1) Was external political pressure exerted on the Department by the Jones group or others to prevent or limit any investigation into the cult's activities befo Representative Ryan's visit?

2) Was the Department (CA in particular) approache by civil rights organizations with the request that CA not undertake any investigation of the cult before Representative Ryan's visit?

We would very much appreciate your including these que in your work. We expect to be asked at our authorizat hearing on February 7 if they are being addressed.

Dwight N. Mason
Special Assistant